

THE WELCOME VISITOR

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A SERMON

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“And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

John 11:28-32

IT seems that Martha had heard of Christ's coming and Mary had not. Hence Martha rose up hastily and went to meet the Master, while Mary sat still in the house. From this we gather that genuine believers may, through some unexplained cause, be at the same time in very different states of mind. Martha may have heard of the Lord and seen the Lord. And Mary, an equally loving heart, not having known of His presence, may, therefore, have missed the privilege of fellowship with Him.

Who shall say that Martha was better than Mary? Who shall censure the one or approve the other? Now, beloved, You may be tonight yourselves though true believers in Jesus, in different conditions. I may have a Martha here whose happiness it is to be in rapt fellowship with Christ. You have gone to Him already and told Him of your grief—you may have heard His answer to your story and you may have been able by faith to say—“I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.” And you may be full of peace and full of joy.

On the other hand, sitting near you may be a person equally gracious as yourself who can get no farther than the cry, “Oh! that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!” Dear Martha, condemn not Mary. Dear Mary, condemn not yourself. Martha, be ready to speak the word of comfort to Mary. Mary, be ready to receive that word of comfort and in obedience to it, rise up quickly, and in imitation of your sister, go and cast yourself, as she has done already, at the Savior's feet.

I must not say, because I have not all the joy my brother has, that I am no true child of God. Children are equally children in your household, though one is little and the other be full grown, and they are equally dear to you, though one is sick and the other in good health—though one is quick at his letters and another is but a dull scholar.

The love of Christ is not measured out to us according to our conditions or attainments. He loves us irrespective of all these. Jesus loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus. He loves all His own and they must not judge Him by what they feel, nor measure His love by a sense of their own want of love.

Hoping that the Lord will now bless the word to all of us who are His own people, I shall speak of two things—a visit *from* the Master—a visit *to* the master.

I. HERE IS A VISIT FROM THE MASTER.

Martha came and said to Mary, “The Master is come”—or as we might read it truly, “The Master is *here* and calleth for thee.” “The Master is come.” “The Master is *here*.”

Beloved friends who are just now without the present fellowship with Christ, which you fondly desire, permit me to whisper this in your ear—“The Master is *here*! The Master is *here*!” We cannot come round and whisper it secretly as Martha did, but take the message each one of you to himself—“The Master is *here*.”

He is here, for He is accustomed to be where His Word is preached with sincerity of heart. He is accustomed to be wherever His saints are gathered together in His name. We have His own dear word for this—the best pledge we can have—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” We have met in His name, we have met for His worship, we have met to preach His Gospel—and the Master is here. We are sure He is here, for He always keeps His word. He never fails of His promise.

He is here, for some of us feel His presence. Had Mary said to Martha, How do you know that the Master is come? she would have answered, “Why I have spoken with Him and He has spoken to me.” Well, there are some among us who can say, “He has spoken to us.” Did we not hear Him speaking when we were singing that hymn just now?

*“My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights.
The glory of my brightest days,
The comfort of my nights.”*

Did not we perceive Him to be near some of us, when we were singing—

*“Oh! see how Jesus trusts Himself
Unto our childish love,
As though, by His free ways with us,
Our earnestness to prove”?*

I, for one, did, if none besides. I can bear good witness to you that are languishing for His company—
“The Master is here.”

And mark, He is here none the less surely because you have not, as yet, found it out, for a fact does not depend upon our cognizance of it, though our comfort may be materially affected thereby. The Master was at Bethany, though Mary had not heard an inkling of the good tidings. There she sat, her eyes red with weeping, and her whole soul in the grave with her brother Lazarus. Yet Jesus was there for all that.

Make the case your own—though you may have come here troubled with all the week’s cares—though while you have been sitting here the thought of something that will happen tomorrow has been depressing you—though some bodily weakness has been holding you down when you would lift up your spirit towards God, yet that does not alter the fact—“The Master is come.” The Master is here.

Oh! there was Mary sighing, “If only Christ had been here! Oh! if only Christ would come!” And there He was! And perhaps you are saying, “Oh! that He were near me!” He is near you right now. You sigh for what you have and pine for that which is near you. You think not, like Mary Magdalene, that He stands in this garden. You are asking, “Where have ye laid him?” While your joy and comfort seem to you dead, He, whose absence you mourn, stands present before you.

Oh! that He would but open those eyes of yours, or rather that He would open your heart, by saying to you, “Mary!” Let Him but speak one word right home to you personally and you will answer with gladness, “Rabboni!” The Master is come here, though you as yet have not perceived Him.

That word “The Master” has a sweet ring about it. He is the Master. He that is come is earth’s Master. What are your cares? He can relieve them. What are your troubles? He can overcome them and sweep them out of the way. The Master has come. “Cast thy burden on the Lord: he will sustain thee.”

He is hell’s Master. Are you beset with fierce temptations and foul insinuations of the arch-fiend? The Master has come. Oh! lift your head, you captive daughter of Zion, for your bands are broken. The Breaker is come up before them. Their king shall pass before them and the Lord on the head of them. He who has come is no menial servant, but the right royal Master Himself. The Master is come.

What though your heart now seem cold as a stone and your spirit is cast down within you? What if death has set up its adamant throne in your breast? The Master has come and His presence can thaw

the ice, dissolve the rock, bring you all the graces of the Spirit and all the blessings of heaven that your soul can possibly require.

“The Master is come”—does not that touch your soul and fire your passions? Whose Master is He but your own? And what a Master! No taskmaster, no slave’s master, but such a Master that His absolute sovereignty inspires you with the sweetest confidence, for He binds you with the bonds of love and draws you with the cords of a man. Master indeed is He!

Aye, Lord and sole Master of your soul’s inmost care if you be what you profess to be. The Master whose sceptre is the sceptre of reed which He carried in His hand when He was made a scorn and scoffing for you. The Master whose crown is the crown of thorns which He wore for your sins when He accomplished your redemption. Your Master.

You shall call Him no more Baali, but Ishi shall His name be called. He is only Master in that same sense in which the tender loving husband is the master of the house. Love makes Him supreme, for He is Master in the art of love, and therefore, Master of our loving hearts. How sweetly does, “My Master,” sound! “My Master.” Why, if nothing else might bestir us to get up and run to meet Him, it should be the sound of that blessed word, “The Master is here: the Master has come.”

But Martha added—and it is a very weighty addition (may the Holy Ghost make application of it to your heart)—“and calleth for thee.” “But is that true?” says one, “does He call for me?” Dear brother, dear sister, I know that if I say He does, I shall not speak without His warrant, for when He comes into a congregation He calls for all His own.

He speaks, and He says to all whom He loves, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.” I know He does, because love always delights in fellowship with the object that is loved. Jesus loved you or ere the earth was. His delights were with the sons of men from old eternity. He loved you so well that He could not stay in heaven without you, and He came here to seek you and to save you. And now it gives His heart joy to be near you.

He says, “Let Me hear your voice. Let Me see your face, for sweet is your voice and your countenance is comely.” I tell you it is Christ’s heaven to hear the voices of His people. It is that for which He left heaven—that He might give them voices with which to praise Him. Do you think He loved you so and will live without you? Nay, He calls for you.

What is His Word, indeed, all through, but a call to His own beloved to come to Him? What are Sabbath-days but calls in which He says, “Come away! Come away, My beloved, from the noise and turmoil of the city, and come into the quiet places where My sheep lie down and feed”? What are your troubles but calls to you in which, with somewhat of harshness as it seems to you, but with an inner depth of love, He says, “Away My beloved, from all earthly delights, to find your All in Me”?

What is the Communion of the Lord’s Supper but another call to you, “Come unto Me”? The bread which you shall eat, and the wine which you shall drink—these are for yourself—and the call which is encompassed by them as by symbols is for each one of you. The Master is here, and calls for you—for each one.

“Oh! but” says Mary, “my eyes are bleared with weeping.” He calls for you, you red-eyed mourner. “Ay, but my heart is heavy with a sad affliction.” He calls for you, you burdened sufferer. “Ay, but I have been full of levity all the week and have forgotten Him.” He calls you that He may cleanse you yet again. “Ah! but I have denied Him.” What says He but, “Go, and tell my disciples, *and Peter*”? He calls for you, that He may forgive you yet again, and may say to you, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” I care not who you are, if you are one of His, the Master is come and calls for you.

“Why,” says one, “no Christian has spoken to me for a long while.” But the Master calls for you. “But I seem so solitary in this great metropolis, and though I know my Master, I do not know any of His people.” Never mind His people. The *Master* is come, and calls for you. “Ay, but I think if I am one of His I must be at the very tail-end of the catalog, and the last of all.” He calls for you—for *you*.

Oh! may that word now come home and may each one feel, “If He calls for me, there is such condescension in that call, such tender memories of my weakness, such consideration for my distance

and my forgetfulness, that I will loiter no longer. Is the Master come? Lo, I am ready for Him. Does the Master call? Lo, my spirit answers, ‘Come, Master, my heart’s doors are flung wide open. Come and sit on the throne of my heart. Enter in and sup with me and I with You, and make this a gladsome season of intimate fellowship between my soul and her Lord.’”

Turning now to our second part, let us talk awhile of—

II. A VISIT TO THE MASTER.

It follows on the first as a fit sequence. We never come to Christ till Christ comes to us. “Draw me: I will run after thee.” That is the order. It is not, “We will run after You, Lord—draw us.” Neither is it thus. When a soul is saying, as we sung in the hymn just now—

*“If You have drawn a thousand times,
Oh! draw me yet again,”*

—then, beloved, He *is* drawing us. When we are praying to be drawn, we are being drawn all the while.

In answer to the Lord’s visit, you will notice the conduct of Mary. She rose up quickly. She bestirred herself. Oh! let each one of our souls now say, “Has the Lord called for me? Why, then, should I loiter or linger for a single moment? I will get up this very moment. I will say, ‘My Lord, I have come to You. You have called me, and here I am.’”

Oh! for grace to shake off the sorrow that makes some hearts sit still! Mary’s dear brother was newly laid in the tomb, but she rose up quickly to go and meet her Master. Dear Mother, forget for a few minutes that dear unburied child still in the house. Forget awhile, dear husband, that sick wife of yours towards whom your heart so naturally flies. Forget, beloved, just now, all that you have suffered, all that you expect to suffer, all that you have lost or may be losing. The Master is come, and calls for you.

Rise up quickly. Let not these things constrain you to inactivity of spirit, but rise up now, and by His grace come away from them. She bestirred herself. She put on her best efforts, that she might not tarry when He called. And then she went, we find, just as she was. She rose up quickly, it is said, and she went. She came unto Him. No sooner said than done. She arose and she came.

Well, but should she not have washed her face? Tears add but little beauty to the maiden’s visage. And that hair of hers, I doubt not, all disheveled—might she not have arranged that a little, and prepared her dress, and made herself trim for the Lord? Ah! that is a temptation for the mass of us—“I cannot expect to have fellowship at the table, because I have not come prepared.”

Brother, you ought to have come prepared, but at the same time, if you have not, rise up quickly and come to the Master as you are. The Master had seen Mary with tears before, for He had felt her tears upon His feet. He had seen her with disheveled hair before, for she had wiped His feet with the hairs of her head. If you are out of order, it is not the first time Christ has seen you so. I do not think a mother’s love depends upon seeing her child in its Sunday clothes. She has seen it, I guarantee you, in many a trim in which she would not wish anybody else to see it, but she has loved it none the less.

Come, then, you unprepared one. Come to Him who knows just what you are and in what state you are—He will not cast you out—only make brave to believe that when Christ calls, His call is a warrant to come, however unfit we may be.

And oh! how promptly she left all other comforters to come to Christ. There were the Jews that came to comfort her. I dare say they did their best, but she did not stay for the Rabbi to finish his fine discourse, nor for the first scholar of the Sanhedrin to complete that dainty parable by which he hoped to charm her ear and assuage her sorrow. She went straight away to the Master, then and there.

So would I have you forget that there are other comforters—forget your joys as well as your griefs—leave all for Him and let your soul be only taken up with that Great Master of yours who calls for you, for all your faculties, for all your emotions, for all your passions, for your entire self. Come right away, by His help, from everything else that would absorb any part of your being. Rise up and draw near to Him.

But it seems, beloved, that when Mary had reached the Master's feet, she had done all she could, for it is said that she fell at His feet. Ah! you remember she had once *knelt* at His feet when she washed them. She had once *sat* at His feet when she heard His words. This time she *fell* at His feet. She could neither kneel to do Him service, nor sit to pay Him the reverence of a disciple. She fell all but in a swoon, life gone from her. She fell at His feet.

Never mind, if you are at His feet, if you do but fall there. Oh! to die there—it were life itself! Once get to Jesus and you may say, like Joab at the altar when Benaiah said, “Come away, for Solomon has sent me to slay thee.” “Nay,” said Joab, “but I will die here”—and there at the horns of the altar he died. And if we must die, we will die there at His feet.

Fall down at His feet. Beloved, if you do not feel you have strength for communion tonight, never mind—it does not want any.—

*“Oh! for this no strength have I;
My strength is at His feet to lie.”*

Some of us know what it is to be scarcely able to get together two consecutive thoughts—not to be able to master a text or lay hold of a promise—still we could say, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” We could lie down at the feet that were pierced and feel how sweet it is to swoon at the Savior's feet. Only get there. Let your will and heart be good to get at Him now, for the Master is here and calls for you. Come, though in the coming you should utterly fail to get enjoyment, come and fall at His feet.

Do I hear any of you saying, “Ah! but I have a heavy thought pressing at my heart, and if I come to Him it is not much that I can say in His honor. I feel but little love, and gratitude, and joy. I could not pour out sweet spikenard from the broken box of my heart.”

Be it so, only pour out what you have. For what did Mary do? She said—and the Master did not chide her, though He might have done—“Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” Oh! it was half cruel, for she seemed to say, “Why wast thou not here?” It was unbelieving in part, and yet there is a deal of faith in it—a sweet clinging to Him.

Martha had said the same and it shows how often those two sisters had said to one another, “Would God the Master was here.” When the brother was very sick and near to death, they were saying to one another, “Oh! if we could get the Master here!” That had been the great thought with them, so they pour it out.

Beloved, when you are at Jesus' feet, if you have an unbelieving thought, if you have something that half chides Him, pour out your heart like water before the Lord—

*“Let us be simple with Him then—
Not backward, stiff, and cold;
As though our Bethlehem could be
What Sinai was of old.”*

Tell Him the weakness. Tell Him the suspicion. Tell Him all the sin that has been, and all the sin that is haunting you. Tell it all to Him—and at His feet is the place to tell it. You will then be eased of your burden. Beloved, you know how Mary received consolation. It was a great day for her when she got to Christ's feet, and then the Master began to do wondrously, and very soon Lazarus was restored.

So now, your first business, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, is to get to Jesus. “Oh! but Lazarus is dead.” Never mind Lazarus. You get to Jesus and He will see to Lazarus. “Oh! but my business fails me.” Never mind the business just now. Get to Jesus. “Oh! but there is sickness in my house.” Leave the sickness for awhile now. The one thing is to get to Jesus and to His feet.

“Oh! but my own heart is not as it should be.” Forget your own heart, too, and remember Jesus. He is to you all that you can need. He is made of God, unto you, “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption”—and do you come to Him quickly, and you shall have all you want.

“Ah!” says one, “I cannot bear to think of God, for I do not love Him.” “Ah!” says another, “but I can bear to think of Him, for though I did not love Him, He loved me.” And now you may say, “I cannot bear to think of coming to Jesus, for I do not love Him as I should.” Ah! but think of Him, for He loves you. His grace to you is boundless. Now let your own self be put aside awhile, and remember this “faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners.” Come, then, in the strength of that!

I must close by saying a few words to those whom hitherto I have not addressed. Perhaps there are some here to whom this message has never come—“The Master is come and calleth for thee.” If it were to reach them tonight, it would be the first time they ever heard it. O dear heart, I pray it may come to you, that this may be the beginning of days with you. The Master has come.

This is certain. From the highest throne in glory to the manger, to the cross, and to the grave, the Master has come. That He calls for you, this is also certain, I think. Let me give you a text in which, I think, He calls for you. “Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” “Whomsoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.”

Calls He not for you, too, in this text, “Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the LORD, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”? Calls He not for you in this verse, where He bids all that labor and are heavy-laden come unto Him, that they may rest? Or in that other, “Come now, let us reason together, saith the LORD. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson, their shall be as snow”?

He calls for you. Do not disbelieve Him. It is certainly matchless grace, but He is God and none is like unto Him. “As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are his thoughts above your thoughts.” But does your heart say, “Why, if I thought Jesus called for me, I would come”? Then He does call you. That speech of yours, “I would come,” proves it. It is He that makes you feel willing.

Do you long for Him? Oh! He is putting His hand in at the door of your heart and making your heart yearn for Him. Does a tear drop on the floor, and do you say, “It cannot be that such a one as I should ever live and be saved, and be Christ’s”? Why, your very admiration at His grace shows that some of His grace is at work upon you.

Trust in Him! Trust in Jesus whether you sink or swim. Trust that that arm can save. Trust that those pierced hands can grasp you. Trust that that heart that was gashed with a spear can feel for you. Trust yourself wholly to Him. “Go thy way; thy sins which are many are forgiven thee.” If you have trusted Him, you are saved.

Come and cast yourself at Jesu’s feet tonight. Is there no young man here to whom this shall be Christ’s voice? You say you cannot believe and cannot repent—and cannot do anything? Then fall like dead at Jesu’s feet and look up to Him—to Him alone, and you shall have life. Is there no young woman here burdened in heart, to whom the Savior’s feet may become a place of refuge from all her fear? I trust there is.

And if I speak to someone far advanced in years, who imagines that he, at least, must be given up by mercy, it is not so. You have but a few days more to live, but the Master calls for you. Rise up quickly! May tonight witness your forsaking of your sins and your clinging to His cross. And one day you shall see His face in heaven without a veil between.

The Lord bless you, beloved, for Christ’s sake Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 16

Verse 1. *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

That you should not be scandalized when you are put to suffering on My account—that you should not dread the offense of the cross and turn aside because of it. How considerate our Master is! It seems as if He might be angry at us if He suspected that we could be offended by anything that He did or suffered, or that we had to suffer for Him—but He knows the weakness of our flesh and therefore, He speaks with so much elaboration of comfort.

2-4. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.

When you meet with rebuke, and slander, and jesting, and jeering against you for Christ's sake, He has told you of them—

*“Temptation or pain—He has told you no less;
The heirs of salvation, you know from His word
Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.”*

4. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

While they had His presence, He was like a wall of fire round about them. They did not want to be protected then from dangers which had not come. And the Lord has not told us yet some of the things which He will reveal to us, by and by, because the trial has not come. You feel as if you could not die at peace just now. You dread death. You shall have dying grace in dying moments. Do not be questioning yourself as to whether you have dying grace now. You do not want it yet. You shall have it when the time comes.

5-6. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

It often happens, that if we were to inquire a little more into the sorrow, it would vanish. They did not ask Him why He went away. They fretted because He was going. Now He tells them why He was going.

7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

It is a better thing for us in this world to have the Holy Spirit in us than to have the corporeal presence of Christ with us. We are better helped by the Holy Spirit than we would have been if Jesus had remained on earth.

8-12. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Partly because their sorrow incapacitated them from hearing anymore, partly because their spiritual infancy did not permit them as yet to learn the deeper doctrines which are rather meat for men than milk for babes. O you that are teachers of others, imitate the prudence of Jesus. Do not teach people too much at once. Do not try to make a little child understand all that an advanced and experienced saint knows. Say, as your Master did, “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”

13-14. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Now that is a sure mark of the Holy Spirit. If there be any spirit which does not glorify Christ, it is not the Holy Spirit. It is not the Comforter. If you hear any doctrine which detracts from the dignity of Christ's nature, from the glory of Christ's person, from the perfection and the necessity of Christ's sacrifice, you may depend upon it that it is not the doctrine of God. Reject it at once. It may poison you. It cannot build you up. “He shall glorify me.”

14-15. *For he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.*

The things of the Father are Christ's. We learn them as Christ's. The Spirit brings them to us as Christ's and so Christ is glorified and we are comforted.

16-19. *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him,*

And that is a very sweet thing. Sometimes we are afraid to pray. Sometimes we feel as if we could not bring ourselves to prayer. But it is so sweet. "Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him." There is the essence of prayer in the desire to pray. There is really a request which Jesus Christ can read in the heart that longs to make a request and scarcely dares do it.

19-20. *And said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

Not merely shall your sorrow be taken away, but it shall be transformed. As the alchemist thought that he turned baser metal into gold, so in very truth by a heavenly alchemy does Christ turn the sorrow of His people not in this case only, but in many others, into joy.

21-24. *A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

They had asked so little that it came to nothing, and they had not yet learned the art of using His name in prayer—and a great many Christians have not learned it yet. Often they say, and they say very properly, "for Jesus Christ's sake." That is good, but there is something better than to ask in His name.

Suppose a person calls at my door and asks me to relieve him, out of love to some friend of mine. That is very well. But suppose he says, "I come from that friend of yours, and he told me to use his name, and to put whatever you did for me to his account. Why, that is a stronger plea altogether. Happy are they who know how to use the name, the authority, the claims, the rights of Jesus as an argument with which to back their prayers.

24. *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

You have got some joy, but there is room for more. Brethren, has your joy ever been full yet? Full? Could not you be more joyous? Oh! there have been times with some of us when we could not be more joyous than we were. We have asked, and we have received, and we have been so glad, that we hardly knew how to live under the blessed delirium of gladness. We have seemed to be carried away with an intense delight because God has heard our prayers. "That your joy may be full."

25. *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs:*

In short, parabolic sentences.

25-27. *But the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

That is a very precious truth of God. While Jesus does pray the Father for us, yet we are not to look upon that as if Christ's prayer made the Father love us. No. Not only is it not Christ's prayer that makes the Father love us. It is not even Christ's death that makes the Father love us. Often do we repeat that verse—

*“’Twas not to make the Father’s love
Towards His people flame,
That Jesus, from the realms above,
On the kind errand came.*

*’Twas not the pangs that He endured,
Nor all the woes He bore,
That God’s eternal love procured,
For God was love before.”*

It is an exposition and display of the Father’s love—and the prayer of Christ, though blessedly useful, does not make the Father love us, or willing to grant the request. “For the Father himself loveth you.” Notice the blessed condescension of Christ that He should mention His people’s virtues. He says to these men that had been with Him, who really do not seem as if they had loved Him very much, and certainly were not very strong in faith, but were often in such a state of unbelief that He had to say, “Where is your faith?” Yet He says, “The Father himself loveth you because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.”

28-31. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

Are you at this moment full of faith? Do not trust yourselves. Do not begin to glory in the strength of your faith.

32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

Oh! you that say you believe tonight, beware lest tomorrow you should be scattered in unbelief and fear. Whatever faith we have is God’s giving, and if it remain with us, it will be because God keeps it there. There is not one among us that has any faith to spare. We do not know but that the very hour is come, even now, that will try us and make us ask whether we have any faith at all.

33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.

There is a blessed word of good cheer for us, every one!

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.